

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTO 02701 191623Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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O 191600Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4612
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 2701

LONDON FOR ARA DAS BUSHNELL

PANAMA FOR ROBERT PASTOR, NSC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PINS, DR
SUBJECT: INITIAL PRESS AND PUBLIC REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

REF SANTO DOMINGO 2694, SANTO DOMINGO 2695

1. INITIAL PRESS REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S LATE NIGHT SPEECH
CONCERNING DOMINICAN ELECTORAL SITUATION REFLECTS A MIXED
WILLINGNESS TO GIVE BALAGUER SOME BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT AS
TO HIS DESIRE TO PUT THE ELECTORAL PROCESS BACK ON TRACK BY
ACCEPTING RESULTS OF ELECTION AS WILL BE DECLARED BY
CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD, BUT ALSO A HEALTHY MEASURE OF
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PAGE 02 SANTO 02701 191623Z

SKEPTICISM AS TO INTENTIONS OF BALAGUER AND HIS CIVILIAN/
MILITARY FOLLOWERS.

2. BOTH MORNING LISTIN DIARIO AND EL CARIBE CHOSE UPBEAT REACTIONS
IN EDITORIALS THIS MORING. BOTH DAILIES, ARE CONSIDERED
COUNTRY'S "PRESTIGE PRESS". LISTIN EDITORIAL TENDS TO
HIGHLIGHT PRESIDENT'S COMMITMENT IN "EMOTIVE SPEECH" TO ACCEPT

RESULTS OF ELECTION AND TAKES HEART IN PRESIDENT'S ADMONITIONS TO HIS REFORMIST PARTY FOLLOWERS TO ALSO ABIDE BY RESULTS. LISTIN AID BALAGUER'S "DISPOSITION TO HAND OVER POWER BY VIRTUE OF THE ELECTORAL OUTCOME AND TO COOPERATE WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT MIGHT MEAN THAT THE PRESIDENT CONSIDERS THAT THE DOMINICAN REVOLUTIONARY PARTY WILL COME OUT THE WINNER IN THE ELECTIONS." LISTIN ALSO APPEARED TO TAKE HEART IN BALAGUER'S STATEMENT THAT DESPITE IRREGULARITIES COMMITTED BY ELECTORAL BOARD, HE WOULD ACCEPT RESULTS. WITH REGARD TO BALAGUER'S CRITICISM OF FOREIGN INTERVENTION, LISTIN SAID COUNTRY IS "SMALL, POOR, AND BADLY WOUNDED, WHICH ATTRACTS A COUNTLESS NUMBER OF PROTECTORS," BUT ADDED THAT ONLY MAINTAINING A "CIVILIZED POLICY OF PRESERVATION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER WILL FREE US FROM SUCH CATASTROPHIC PROTECTORS." LISTIN CONCLUDED THAT PRESIDENT'S SPEECH HAD "CLEARED THE AIR AND RESTABLISHED CONFIDENCE" AND AFFIRMED THAT "A WORK OF SUCH GREAT HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE" NOW DEPENDS ON BALAGUER.

3. CARIBE ALSO SAYS SPEECH REMOVED DOUBTS OF BALAGUER'S DECISION TO ACCEPT ELECTORAL OUTCOME AND SAID HE HAD "DONE VERY WELL" BY REJECTING FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OUR COUNTRY.

4. GREATER SKEPTICISM WAS THEME OF LIBERAL EL SOL WHICH SAID SPEECH OFFERS A HOPE OF RESOLUTION OF CURRENT CRISIS BUT FOUND SPEECH "SPRINKLED WITH IMPORTANT CONTRADICTIONS." IT QUESTIONED BALAGUER'S RAISING SPECTER OF IRREGULARITIES IN ELECTORAL PROCESS
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PAGE 03 SANTO 02701 191623Z

AND ASKED LIST OF QUESTIONS AS TO WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR MILITARY INTERVENTION IN PROCESS AND ONGOING PERSECUTION OF MUNICIPAL ELECTORAL BOARD MEMBERS IN CITIES AROUND COUNTRY. LINKING THESE ASPECTS TO PRESS STATEMENT OF PR SPOKESMAN IN WHICH PARTY CLAIMED VICTORY, EL SOL SAYS, "ONE IS JUSTIFIED IN FEARING THAT WHAT IS IN TRAIN IS A PROCESS AIMED AT DENYING THE POPULAR WILL". IT ADDED THAT NOW IS THE TIME FOR CONCRETE FACTS, NOT MORE PROMISES AND THE ELECTORAL BOARDS AROUND THE COUNTRY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE THEIR VOTE COUNTING LABORS WITHOUT POLICE AND MILITARY PRESSURES.

5. ALSO INITIAL EARLY REACTION BY EMBASSY CONTACTS REFLECTS THIS MIX OF HOPE AND SKEPTICISM OVER WHETHER BALAGUER IS TRYING TO PREPARE COUNTRY FOR HIS OWN RELINQUISHMENT OF POWER OR MERELY ATTEMPTING TO SET STAGE FOR SOME FRAUDULENT ELECTION OUTCOME. IF LATTER, SPEECH CAN BE SEEN AS SIMPLE DEVICE TO GET SOME RELIEF FROM DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE AND TO WIN SOME TIME FOR FURTHER MANEUVERING. NEVERTHELESS EMBASSY HAS REPORTS THAT MILITARY NOW HAVE RETURNED TO NORMAL STATUS.

6. EMBASSY BELIEVES US POSTURE SHOULD BE TO WELCOME BALAGUER'S REITERATION OF HIS COMMITMENT TO ABIDE BY RESULTS OF DEMOCRATIC

PROCESS AND TO LOOK FORWARD TO RESULT OF SCRUTINY OF ELECTION
RETURNS STILL UNDERWAY.
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